



Gym Roadmap

How to best use the improveyourchess.com site

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Purpose of the Gym

The gym gives you a series of monthly exercises that if done regularly will improve your chess in all departments. The course is designed for anyone from near beginner to a grading of 2000.

It is for the following levels:

Novice: You just know the moves but have never played competitively or looked at a chess book

Beginner: You know the moves and have played casually or at a very basic competitive level.

Intermediate: You are graded between 1200 and 1500

Advanced: You are graded up to 2000

Membership

This entitles you to use all aspects of the gym each month for 12 calendar months.

Logging In

You use your email address as your username, and the password you've given in the application form. Please make a note of your password or make it memorable. But if you forget it simply click on the 'forgot your password?' link on the login page, and we will send it you.

Once logged in you will see the *Member's Home* page and from here you can click on the respective links here, or on the left-hand navigation bar, to either go through the exercises or download other improvement material.



Tactical Puzzles

This section is by far the most important element of your training at the gym. If you do nothing else you should do this regularly.

There are 60 puzzles each month in HTML form (with the exception of the Novices, who have 40). There is also an archive of the solutions and an archive of past puzzles.

How to use it: We recommend that you do 15 puzzles a week (or 10 for a Novice), i.e. one workout. With the other elements of the gym that should be enough, particularly if you have other things to do with your life. However, if you are really keen then go through all the archived puzzles first ('Tactical Archive'), you can never really get enough practice to develop your tactical 'muscles'!

How it works: You are given 3 points for every correct answer plus a bonus of 2 points if you do them in the time allotted. You get three attempts, and if you get the move wrong your score will diminish. You move the pieces by clicking on the piece, then moving to the square you want it to go to, then clicking to release.

Technical details: You can only do the fully scored and timed puzzles once. But you can go over them time and time again in non-competitive mode, that is not timed or scored, as many times as you want in the archive section. This works best with MS Internet Explorer or Firefox, but should be OK with most modern browsers.

Important

You can change levels any time you want. For instance you can go from intermediate to advanced to see which level suits you best, then back again. In fact, if you are hooked on the puzzles, try doing them all!!

The Novice Section

This section is found in the 'Tactical Archive', and comprises an introduction to twelve of the most common tactical themes followed by ten puzzles on each to build the tactical knowledge of absolute beginners. It is timed and scored.

We recommend one section a week.

Once the Novice feels he has mastered the section he should then move on to beginners.



Additional Exercises

In addition to the tactics we provide a number of other exercises to test and improve different facets of your chess play.

How Good is Your Chess?

Grandmaster Daniel King's hugely popular self-improvement articles, covering all facets of the game.

This section is for improving your game play by guessing the next move of one of the players in an exceptional master game.

Each two weeks there is a new game which is timed and scored. You will need to download our own HGIYC software which runs on Windows (you will only need to do this once).

Improve Your Strategy

This is prepared by Grandmaster Glenn Flear.

It contains a number of strategy puzzles each month, which can be arranged by theme or player, and which are scored.

The files are in archived ChessBase form (.CBV) You need ChessBase, or any of the analysis engines (Fritz, Hiarcs, etc.) for this section, but failing that you can use ChessBase light which is available as a free download from www.chessbase.com

Your Move!

Again by Grandmaster Glenn Flear.

This section is for improving your move selection ability. There are 10-20 puzzles every month which are all scored. Again this is in .CBV format.

Unlock Your Genius

A monthly test of your creative and analytical skills where you give your conclusions on a position. There is sometimes a prize for the best answer.



Further Plusses

Instructive articles

You will also find a number of articles with popup games that cover various aspects of the game ('Openings', 'Middlegames' & 'Endgame Secrets' – you can find these on the left-hand navigation bar) these are for your enjoyment and instruction. There are also occasional endgame tests to make sure you have looked at these!

Complimentary eBooks

There are two free eBooks to download: IM Andy Martin's *Study to Win!* Action eBook in .CBV form, and GM Tony Kosten's *Build your perfect opening repertoire* eBook in Acrobat PDF form.

Personal Coaching

An optional extra. Here you can hire your own personal, one-to-one coach from one of our masters which will help you turbo charge your improvement. The coaching is done by email monthly at times to suit you and your tutor.

Download the sample coaching exercise from the Member's Home page to see how it works in practice, and a copy of the guidelines to see how to best profit from this.

Forum

A discussion group for members where you can exchange views and information.

How to use all the material on the site

We suggest you go through all the instructive material first (Middlegame and Endgame - these are now ordered), then Glenn's Strategy, including past issues - this way you will learn important basics before going on to do the HGIYC and Your Move! material, which will test that knowledge.

Meanwhile you should be doing as many tactics as you can, you can never get enough practice!

Have fun!